

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Applicants kindly thank the Examiner for his indication of allowable subject matter as to Claims 1-17 and Claims 19, 20, and 21. In response to the Final Office Action the applicants have cancelled Claim 18 and amended dependent Claims 19-21. Entry of the above amendments and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and comments made herein is requested.

Objections to the Claims:

Claims 19, 20, and 21 have been objected to as depending on a rejected base claim. Accordingly, these claims have been amended to independent form with each of the new independent claims incorporating all limitations of rejected base claim 18. Accordingly, the applicants request withdrawal of these objections.

Rejections under 35 USC 102

Claim 18 stands rejected as being anticipated by *Wilhelm et al* (USPN 6,211,623). Claim 18 has been cancelled making this ground of rejection moot. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection of Claim 18 be withdrawn for at least this reason.

Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention as presently presented is patentable over the art of record and that this case is now in condition for allowance.

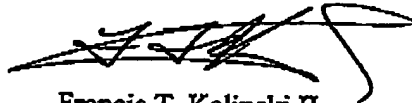
Accordingly, the applicants request withdrawal of all pending rejections and request reconsideration of the pending application and prompt passage to issuance. As an aside, the applicants clarify that any lack of response to any of the issues raised by the Examiner is not an admission by the applicant as to the accuracy of the Examiner's assertions with respect to such issues. Accordingly, applicant's specifically reserve the right to respond to such issues at a later time during the prosecution of the present application, should such a need arise.

As always, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the applicants representative to discuss any matters pertaining to this case. Should the Examiner wish to contact the undersigned for any reason, the telephone numbers set out below can be used.

If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from Deposit Account No. 12-2252 (Order No. 03-0722).

Respectfully submitted,

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